(b) and (c) Import of edible oils is now under OGL on account of the big gap between demand and supply in the country, which is roughly estimated to be around 30 lakh tonnes. Export of oil in such a context cannot be considered feasible, especially in view of the higher domestic cost *vis-a-vis* international prices. Keeping in view the long-term goal towards attaining as high a degree of self-sufficiency as possible in the edible oil sector, Government have initiated a number of steps recently. These are—

(i) With effect from 12th June, 2000, the duty on raw-oils has been raised from 15% (basic) to 25% (basic). The duty on refined oils has been raised from 25% (basic) to 35% (basic). Duty on other oils has been raised to 45% (basic).

(ii) Use of indigenous oils to a minimum of 25% of the oil-mix in the manufacture of vanaspati has been made mandatory w.e.f. 12th June, 2000.

(iii) W.e.f. 12th June, 2000 use of expeller mustard oil upto 30% in the manufacture of vanaspati has been allowed.

(iv) In order to support the domestic processing industry, in terms of better capacity utilization and value addition within the country as also to minimize the possibility of diversion of oils, import of edible oils at concessional rate of duty has been allowed only to the importers having their own processing facilities.

Ineffectiveness of Consumer Courts

†1300. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Consumer Courts now have become ineffective as they take very long time in delivering judgments;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what action is being taken by Government to streamline the funtioning of the Consumer Courts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Consumer Courts in the country have so far disposed 74.3% of the cases filed with them. However, the disposal of cases by the consumer

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

courts is affected by the inadequate infrastructure, frequent adjournments, non-filling up of posts of Presidents/Members in the consumer courts etc. To remove these obstacles, some of the important steps taken by the Central Governments are as follows:

(i) Strengthening of the infrastructure of the Consumer Courts for which Central Government has provided one-time grant of Rs. 61.8 crores to supplement the efforts of the States/Union Territories (UTs).

(ii) State/UT Governments have been requested to fill up the vacancies of Presidents/Members in the consumer courts in time.

(iii) Central Government has written to the State/UT Governments to hold periodical meetings with the Presidents of the Consumer Courts to monitor and expedite the disposal of the cases.

(iv) Central Government and the National Commission are regularly monitoring the working of the Consumer Courts.

(v) Central Government conducts training courses for the Members of the Consumer Courts to acquaint them with the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 and Rules and other relevant legislations.

(vi) Amendment of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 as considered necessary.

Military help to Sri Lanka

†1301. CHAUDHARY CHUNNI LAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Sri Lankan Government have sought any kind of military assistance from Government; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (b) In April, 2000, after the fall of Elephant Pass to the LTTE, the Sri Lanka Government had requested the Government of India for military assistance. Government do not intend to intervene militarily in Sri Lanka.

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